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January 16, 2021

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A Time for Courage

Grace to you and Peace! For some people, the action of storming the US Capital on January 6 was a shock, but for others, it was not a surprise. As investigations continue, more information is being released of who and how, but we already know why. Just like the violent responses to the Black Lives Matter movement, there is an evil attempt to under-mind the worth of all people and retain power in the hands of those who maintain their supremacy. This is an issue that is alive and fermenting in our local communities everywhere and it is not about a particular political party.

As Christians, we are taught to be kind to all and see the goodness in everyone. But if we follow the way of Jesus, we are also called to name the evil that harms individuals and destroys that which is good in the sight of God. Silence is not acceptable. Not all of us may be comfortable marching in the streets, but we do need to be committed to call out racism and classism when we see it in our daily lives. We also need to look deeper into our own local laws and policies for evidence of white supremacy and inequality that values some people over others.

Many of us will hear quotes from speeches of Martin Luther King Jr this weekend. Quotes that inspire and encourage. Perhaps some of us will hear them differently this year because of our current climate.

I have been made aware that there are threats being made in various parts of the country to UCC pastors and churches in rural areas as well as urban. It is certainly a time to be alert to possible violence against our churches who bear witness to God's love for all people; who do not support white supremacy; and who are active in reaching out to people in need, no matter the color of their skin.

This is not a time for fear, but a time for courage. It is not a time for

violence, but a time to speak what needs to be spoken. For some of us, it is also a time to acknowledge our own complicity in perpetuating evil by remaining silent.

And of course, it is a time for prayer: we are called to pray that hearts will be changed, pray for those working actively for social justice, and pray that we will have the clarity and courage of our faith to speak firmly against evil. We do this knowing and trusting that God will indeed lead us forward toward being God's Beloved Community. May it be so! Blessings! Char

Blessings, Char Burch
Transitional Conference Minister

News from the Conference Office

From the Generosity Coordinator

Here we are in 2021...GOD IS GREAT AND GRATEFUL TO BE PRAISED. We made it thru 2020. We continue to praise, to acknowledge and magnify our Lord GOD. We continue to keep our hearts and minds on the possibilities and the promises in store for us as we continue on this journey, as we continue to journey...together!!

FRIENDLY REMINDER: Transforming Churches Transforming Lives, Cycle One, 2021 Grants applications will be available January 20, 2021. This cycle runs thru March 3rd 2021. Please check it out on our website. Please, please, please follow the guidelines and APPLY.

COVID-19 and 2020 affected us greatly, BUT we are still standing and willing and available to serve. "I can do all things through HIM who strengthens me". Philippians 4:13. Let's stay strong and continue to speak truth!! We will be alright!!

Peace and blessings...as we continue on this JOURNEY,
Min. Carrole

UCC Yearbook - Now is the Time!!!

Now's the time to submit your information for Annual Church Yearbook

reporting. The UCC Data Hub is now open and you can enter your information. Emails were sent to each church with specifics as well as hard copies were mailed this week. If you have questions, or your church did not receive its yearbook information, please email Heather at hfosburgh@secucc.org. More information is also available on our website. Please note, the national setting has been having some trouble with the website, so if the Data Hub is not working when you try to enter your information, please try again a little later.

Opportunities to Serve within the SEC Conference

Perhaps you are seeking a way to become more involved in the ministry that happens on behalf of the Southeast Conference. If so, we are seeking both clergy and lay members for the following Conference Committees. These are positions appointed by the Board of Directors and can be filled immediately: Personnel Committee, Commission on Ministry Teams, Finance Committee. If interested, please complete a Nominations Form here: https://www.secucc.org/resources/nominations-form/

Annual Clergy Information Review

Calling all Ministers: Ordained, Licensed, and Commissioned! The time has come once again for you to fill out your Annual Information Review. This year's form, which looks back on 2020, helps the Conference and the National Setting have the correct and current information on you and your ministry. It also allows the Conference to identify how we can better support you in your ministry. Please either fill out the form online or download and fill in the PDF and return it to the Conference Office by February 28.

Re-Opening of Churches – Conversation for all Church

Leaders

- **Monday, January 25, 7 pm Eastern/6 pm Central**
  We will gather at the end of January to reflect on pandemic changes and how they might impact the life of our local churches. There is also the question about what current practices churches might maintain into the future. We invite all Moderators, Church Leaders, and Clergy to be part of the conversation. REGISTER

Clergy Zoom Connections for January

- **An Hour of Conversations and Prayer**
  Tuesday, January 19, 26 - 11:00 a.m. Eastern (10:00 a.m. Central); Zoom: https://zoom.us/j/479440102
- **Live Harp Meditations for Ministers**
  Thursday, January 21- 12:00 p.m. Eastern (11:00 Central)
  20 minutes of meditation with Celtic harp. Silent prayer and reflection following if desired, facilitated by Rev. Jean Norton. (For questions or to sign up for individual Therapeutic Harp Sessions, contact Jean at HeartSongJean@gmail.com.)
  Zoom: https://zoom.us/j/96976838422
- **Especially for Specialized Ministers**
  Tuesday, January 26, 2021 - 9:30 a.m. Eastern (8:30 a.m. Central)
  Zoom: https://zoom.us/j/354744689

Prayer List

We are continuing the process of praying for authorized ministers,

congregations, and ministry groups throughout 2020. We encourage you to include these prayer requests in your local church newsletter, share them with your prayer circle, and include them in your own prayers.

Week of January 17

- Shalom Spiritual Center UCC, Snellville, GA
- Marvin Albright
- Larry Evans
- Michael Malcom
- Linda Smith
- Tavye Morgan

Week of January 24

- Pilgrim Congregational UCC; Chattanooga, Tennessee
- Joyce Acree
- Paul Eknes Tucker
- J R Finney II
- Kirk Lyman Barner
- Townley McGiffert Jr.

Prayer Requests

- We hold the Rev. **James Janecek** (Fairfield Glade Community Church, Fairfield Glade, TN) in prayer on the passing of his mother in Texas.
- We received word that the father of **Rev. Christy Bonner** passed away in late December. Rev. Bonner is a Spiritual Care Counselor in Chattanooga, TN. Please keep Christy and her family in your prayers.

Churches in Transition

First Congregational, Savannah GA; Trinity Congregational, Athens AL; Rush Memorial, Atlanta GA; United Church of Cookeville, Cookeville TN; Pleasant Hill Community Church, Pleasant Hill TN

News from the Wider Church

Safety and Security Message from the National Setting

The National Setting of the UCC has posted this important announcement: While we are hesitant to raise the alarm and/or overreact, recent events

compel us to inform you about what we are hearing regarding possible threats that have come to our attention. There are reports that "liberal" churches will become targets of possible attacks in the coming week, with the dates of Jan. 17 and Jan. 20 featured more prominently. We strongly encourage you to be attentive to all safety concerns for ministers and congregants, even if it means meeting in a way that is other than in person at a church building this week.

In addition, the UCC Staff in Washington DC has put together suggestions to consider in response to the potential violence in the coming days. The information can be accessed here: https://www.ucc.org/amid-pre-inauguration-turmoil-ucc-leaders-suggest-dos-donts/

January 31 – CHHM Sunday Resources

This is an opportunity to lift up some special ministries that happen on behalf of the UCC beyond the local church. The UCC Council for Health and Human Service Ministries represents many of these UCC ministries. Worship resources are available for download which include a Litany of Gratitude for Essential Workers. Health and Human Service Sunday webpage.

Second PPP Loans are Possible

The recent government Consolidated Appropriations Act (CAA) incudes the possibility of churches drawing a second PPP Loan. UCC General Council Heather Kimmel has prepared a document that helps us understand the possibilities for local churches. View the document.

Gift Acceptance Policy – from the United Church Funds

Imagine this scenario for a moment: An unexpected package from a law firm arrives at a church's office addressed to the Pastor. Inside is a letter from an out-of-town attorney explaining that a person who was baptized and confirmed in the church nearly eight decades prior had recently died and left a portion of her sizable estate to the church, despite having moved across the country to attend college many years ago and never returning to her hometown. Sound good? Maybe and maybe not. Read more about the importance of establishing a Gift Acceptance Policy.

Clergy Renewal Program Grants

The Lilly Endowment National Clergy Renewal Program at Christian Theological Seminary seeks to strengthen Christian congregations by providing opportunities for pastors to step away briefly from the persistent obligations of daily parish life and to engage in a period of renewal and reflection. Eligible congregations will be able to apply for grants of up to $50,000 each. The deadline to apply is April 12, 2021. A new option, a clergy can take short times away rather than 3-4 months. Learn more.

Children's Sunday School Videos

Last fall, the Missouri Mid-South Conference created a series of videos that churches can use as a virtual Children's Sunday School option. The curriculum was written by a gifted group in the Indiana-Kentucky Conference and used with permission. The curriculum theme is, "God Loves Our Feelings." There are 12 weeks of videos, and each video focuses on a different feeling that our children of all ages have probably felt during these pandemics. Here is the link to the videos.

Youth Ministry Resources

The Yale Youth Ministry Institute website offers training materials, curriculum, videos, and other resources that you need for youth ministry. Find everything you need to enrich your development, and train and equip your team at Yale Youth Ministry Institute.

Trainings and Conferences

Healthy Boundaries 101

4/30/2021, Friday, 1:45-5:15 pm– Part 1

- Boundary Basics
- Power & Vulnerability
- Dating, Friends, Dual Relationships, Gifts

5/1/2021, Saturday, 8:45 am-12:15 pm – Part 2

- The Pulpit, Transference, Hugging/Touch, Intimacy
- Emerging Issues
- Self-Care

Both sessions required

This ZOOM workshop meets requirements for regular clergy boundaries training of the Southeast Conference of the United Church of Christ and the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Georgia.

Register no later than April 16, 2021.

- Registration fee is $75 and includes materials.
- A smartphone, tablet, or computer with a camera is required.
- Materials will be mailed to you in advance.
- You will be contacted by email before the event with further information.
- Learn more and register at https://forms.gle/XS29sZfqpx1GfcX6A

COVID-19 Considerations For Church Employers

Join the Insurance Board on January 29 at 2:00 p.m. EST for a webcast that will address issues churches face as employers during COVID-19. Speakers will provide best practice policies and procedures for managing employees and volunteers. Many states may require that employers have specific COVID-19 policies and procedures in place to protect their employees; learn about best practice considerations for your church. REGISTER ONLINE

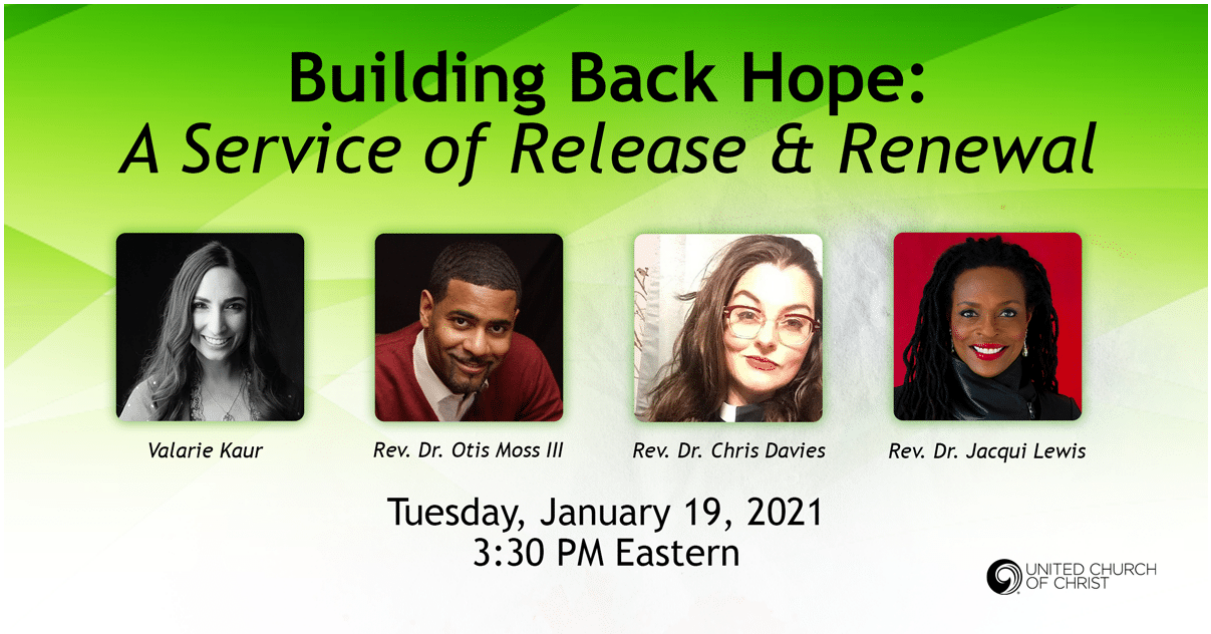
UCC MLK Day of Service: A Day of Teach-In

"By the time we reached the counter, we'd already won." –Dr. James Lawson, Theologian & Tactician of Non-Violence within the Civil Rights Movement

What shall we say to these things? Join the UCC as we explore:

- The Myths and Facts of Nonviolence
- Types and Levels of Conflict
- Six Principals of Kingian Non-violence
- ix Applications of Kingian Non-violence

in a 3.5 hour teach-in with Chuck Alphin, Certified Kingian Non-violence Trainer. Event fee: $35. More details.



Building Back Hope: A Service of Release & Renewal

Please join the United Church of Christ and The People's Inauguration as we curate space for Release & Renewal at the intersection of Pain &

Promise. At the close of Martin Luther King Day Celebrations and on the cusp of the 47th Inauguration, we will worship together bearing witness to this past year and pouring Hope into the future. More details.

Ministry and Dementia Series

The Ruth Frost Parker Center for Abundant Aging is an initiative of United Church Homes and is focused on engagement, education, and advocacy. Their Annual Wisdom Conversations will focus on Ministry and Dementia. This three-part series will be presented on Feb. 2, 9, 16 from 3 pm – 5 pm EST. The registration fee is $15. For more information on speakers and topics, go to https://www.unitedchurchhomes.org/wisdom-conversations/.

Heartland UCC Virtual Faith Formation Conference

The Heartland UCC Conference (formerly the Ohio UCC Conference) extends an open invitation to all who would like to participate in a two-day virtual faith formation conference on February 26 and 27. The conference will involve presentations as well as small group working sessions and large group discussions. The theme this year is "Live it - Engaging the Sacred Texts Through the Lenses of Cultures." The Keynote Speaker is The Rev. Dr. Velda Love, Minister of Racial Justice, Justice and Local Church Ministries-UCC. The cost is $25. Click here to register. Registration will close in mid-February. Register early, the first 50 or so will receive a goodie box in the mail.

Join UCC Just Peace Webinar on January 27

The UCC Just Peace Committee is inviting you to the next quarterly Just Peace Webinar to take place on January 27 (7 p.m. ET/6 p.m. CT/5 p.m. MT/4 p.m. PT/2 p.m. HT). Topic: Where do we go from here? How do we engage? What should be our Just Peace priorities in 2021 as individuals, congregations, Associations, Conferences, and the National Setting? What might we expect from a Biden Administration and how does that influence our work? And, finally, let's talk and share ideas and plans. Join the conversation here.

UCC Global Mission Sermon Videos

Looking for a sermon to open awareness of our UCC Global Mission? UCC

Global Ministries is excited to share mission co-workers' sermons from around the world. Please feel free to watch or to share. If you would like to use one of these sermons in your worship service. Click here for more information and to view the sermons.

Courses from the Lombard Mennonite Peace Center

Destructive conflict and chronic anxiety are pervasive in society today; unfortunately, the church is not immune. Follow through now on that "New Year's Resolution" to learn how to deal more effectively with conflict that threatens to damage relationships and derail the mission of your church! Upcoming sessions of our most popular training events are *Conflict Transformation Skills for Churches* on February 13; *Healthy Congregations* on February 18; *Leadership and Anxiety in the Church* on March 10; and our signature 5-day event, *Mediation Skills Training Institute* on March 1-5, 2021. Additional sessions are available for all four events, as well as significant group discounts for the one-day events. Register directly at https://lmpeacecenter.org/ticketspice/. For further details please visit https://lmpeacecenter.org/brochures/.

Conference Calendar

January 19 @ 11:00 am - 12:00 pm EST
Clergy Conversations via Zoom

January 20 - March 3
Spring 2021 Grant Applications Open

January 21 @ 6:00 pm - 8:00 pm EST
Commission on Ministry Meeting

January 22 - January 23
Virtual MID Retreat

January 25 @ 7:00 pm - 8:30 pm EST
Re-Opening of Churches – Conversation for all Church Leaders

January 26 @ 11:00 am - 12:00 pm EST
Clergy Conversations via Zoom

View the **full calendar** of events online: https://www.secucc.org/events/

Contact Us

Conference Minister: **Rev. Char Burch;** cburch@secucc.org

Assoc. Conf. Minister: **Rev. Heather Fosburgh;** hfosburgh@secucc.org

Generosity Coordinator: **Min. Carrole Moss;** cmoss@secucc.org

Director of Communications: **Don Harris;** dharris@secucc.org

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